



Australian Bureau of Statistics

CensusAtSchool Australia

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Resources



CasSos43 - How has student life changed since 1901?

You can download this activity as a rich text file (RTF) using the links at the bottom of the page

1. Subject Area

Studies of Society and Environment / Human Society and its Environment -History

2. Suggested Level

Years 8-10

3. Key Statistical Literacy Competencies Addressed

- Data awareness
- The ability to understand statistical concepts
- The ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate statistical information
- Communicating statistical information and understandings

4. Overview

In this activity you are asked to write an essay on how student life has changed in Australia since 1901. This will involve using and assessing the usefulness of various primary data sources available to you.

The Census of Population and Housing is conducted every 5 years. The vast majority of Australia households take part in this data collection. This provides much useful information about Australians and can be viewed on the Australian Bureau of Statistics web site. Another data collection is CensusAtSchool which provides a small window into the lives and habits of Australian school children. The CensusAtSchool questionnaire has some questions that will be a useful source of information for your investigation.

5. Requirements

- Computer with internet connection
- Spreadsheet software
- Calculator
- Pens and paper
- Student Worksheet

6. Instructions

The Council for Student Awareness wants to find out how the life of a typical student has changed since 1901. They have heard about the CensusAtSchool project and they think this would provide some excellent data about the life of a student today. They also have some data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1901 Census which they hope will help them understand the life of a typical student in 1901.

The Council has asked you to write an essay on how student life has changed in Australia since 1901.

6.1 Background Research

6.1.1 Using the "1901 Australian Snapshot" (type "1901 census" in the search window on the ABS website, www.abs.gov.au) summarize the key aspects of life in 1901 and 2001 (using 2001 Census data) in a table like the one below.

6.1.2 How does this compare with your own life today?

6.1.3 Go to the CensusAtSchool website and use the Random Sampler to obtain a sample of 200 students.

Reference year *Select Year*

Select questions All

Use this data sample to summarize the key aspects of student life today in your table.

Life in 1901 (based on 1901 Census data)	Life in 2001 (based on 2001 Census data)	My life this year	Life this year (based on CensusAtSchool data)

6.2 Usefulness of Sources of Information

6.2.1 Think about the following questions and write down your responses based on the table above:

- Was the "1901 Australian Snapshot" useful? Why/Why not?
- How accurate do you think the "1901 Australian Snapshot" is? Is accuracy important?
- Was the CensusAtSchool data set useful? Why/Why not?
- How accurate do you think the CensusAtSchool data set is? Is accuracy important?

6.2.2 Discuss your answers with a class mate and then discuss what makes a historical source useful. Write down your agreed response.

6.2.3 As a class discuss what makes a historical source useful. See if you can come up with a checklist which you can use to assess the usefulness of a historical data source.

6.3 The essay

Write an essay on how student life has changed in Australia since 1901. In your essay you should use various information sources (at least two sources from the table above should be used together with any other sources that you feel are useful) to support your view. Your essay should be accompanied by a self evaluation of the usefulness of the information sources you have used.

7. Extension

7.1 Write an essay on "The Day in the Life of a Student in 1901". This would allow you to use your creativity to build on what you have learnt from your research.

7.2 Imagine you are interviewing two students, one from 1901 and one from today. What questions would you ask them?

8. Marking criteria

A student demonstrates	Mark
• Clear communication of ideas using appropriate written forms	9-10

	• Very effectively explains the usefulness of census information for explaining the changes in the way of life of Australians over time • Comprehensive location and synthesis of information to determine reliability.	
	• Good communication of ideas using appropriate written forms • Effectively explains the usefulness of census information for explaining the changes in the way of life of Australians over time • Identifies, with some synthesis, relevant information to determine reliability • Good communication of ideas using appropriate written forms	7-8
	• Limited communication of ideas using appropriate written forms • Satisfactorily explains the usefulness of census information for explaining the changes in the way of life of Australians over time • Distinguishes between fact and opinion in sources and makes simple deductions from sources	5-6
	• Elementary communication of ideas using appropriate written forms • Elementary explanation of the usefulness of census information for explaining the changes in the way of life of Australians over time	3-4
	• Makes some reference to the Census information • May make an observation about the statistics	1-2

9. For the teacher

1. The "1901 Australian Snapshot" can be obtained and printed from the ABS Website. Type "1901 census" in the search window on the ABS home page (www.abs.gov.au).
2. When discussing the usefulness of sources of information, you may like to refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Data Quality Framework. This is the standard framework used to measure data quality at the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The framework consists of six dimensions: relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability and coherence. For more information about this framework, type "ABS Data Quality Framework" in the search window on the ABS home page.
3. You may also like to use this activity to teach essay writing techniques.

Download the Activity

Activity	 HOW HAS STUDENT LIFE CHANGED.rtf (RTF document 101KB)
Data in a spreadsheet	 Sample HOW HAS STUDENT LIFE CHANGED.xls (Excel document 635KB)
Data in a table	No table has been produced for this activity as the breadth of the investigation is such that students needs to access all the data.

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